

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00397 031744Z

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6521

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT EI UK (NI)

SUBJ: IRA FEUD

REF: DUBLIN 1736, DUBLIN 1820

1. SEAN GARLAND, AN OFFICER OF "OFFICIAL" SINN FEIN, WAS SHOT AND SERIOUSLY WOUNDED OUTSIDE HIS DUBLIN HOME MARCH 1. THIS KIND OF ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IS UNUSUAL IN REPUBLIC. IT WAS CLEARLY PART OF A FEUD BETWEEN OFFICIAL SINN FEIN/IRA AND THE NEW "IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY" (IRSP). THE NEW SPLINTER PARTY WAS FORMED BY DISSIDENTS WHO THOUGHT OFFICIALS WERE TOO PASSIVE ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION" (THROWING OUT THE BRITISH). THE IRSP THUS SEEMS TO OCCUPY A POSITION ABOUT HALF-WAY BETWEEN THE OFFICIALS AND THE PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN/IRA, WHICH HAD EARLIER BROKEN AWAY. SEE REFTELS.

2. SINCE THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE OFFICIALS AND THE IRSP, SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A SHOOTING FEUD IN NI. (SEE REPORTS BY CONGEN BELFAST.) THE NEW PARTY HAS MADE SOME POLITICAL PROGRESS, NOTABLY ITS ACQUISITION OF BERNADETTE DEVLIN MCALISKEY. THE IRSP DENIES THAT IT HAS A "MILITARY WING," BUT THE DENIALS SEEM A MERE PLAY ON WORDS.

3. THE DUBLIN SHOOTING HAS ALARMED GOVERNMENT AND NEWSPAPERS, BOTH
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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00397 031744Z

OF WHICH ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ALL VARIATIONS ON THE IRA THEME.

EDITORIALS COMPLAIN OF CHICAGO-STYLE GANGSTERISM."

4. ONE SOURCE WHO HAS FREQUENT CONTACT WITH SINN FEIN MEMBERS TELLS US THAT HE BELIEVES THE FEUD IS MAINLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OFFICIALS, WHO ARE DETERMINED TO STAMP OUT THE NEW SPLINTER GROUP BEFORE IT HAS A CHANCE TO GROW. SAME SOURCE COMMENTS THAT THE OFFICIALS ARE NOW, IN HIS OPINION, EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE PROVISIONALS. OFFICIALS ARE BETTER ORGANIZED, HE SAYS, AND EQUALLY RUTHLESS. THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT THEY WILL INHERIT THE "REVOLUTION" WHEN IT COMES, AS THEY CONFIDENTLY EXPECT IT WILL.

5. COMMENT: POOR IRELAND SEEMS TO HAVE ACQUIRED YET ANOTHER SECRET ARMY, WHICH IS THE LAST THING MOST OF THE PUBLIC WANTS. LIKE THE OFFICIALS AND THE PROVISIONALS, THE IRSP IS UNLIKELY TO ACQUIRE ANY BROAD PUBLIC SUPPORT, THOUGH WE ASSUME BERNADETTE CAN WIN AT LEAST ONE SEAT IN ANY NI ELECTION.
MOORE

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